



Wadajir Somali Community Centre

Wadajir's Elderly Lunch Club

£14,872

Organisation Type:

Registered Charity

Area of Benefit:

Teviot Community Hall,
E14 0QZ

Number of Project

Beneficiaries:

20

Primary Beneficiary:

Older People

Primary Ethnicity:

African

Primary Age Group:

Seniors (65+)

Organisation's Aims & Objectives

Wadajir Somali Community Centre was founded in 2003 out of a need to help newly arrived Somali community integrate into wider society and access available services.

Project Details

This funding request is to continue the group's lunch club with older Somali women for 12 months starting in October 2021. Similar to their original plan for last year prior to Covid-19, sessions will take place Monday to Thursday from 10am to 2pm in Teviot Community Hall.

Approximately 15-20 women will attend the lunch club daily, each of them will pay £2.00 towards their meal. The group has reduced the number of service users to 20 to ensure the project takes place in a Covid-19 safe environment. Each day, beneficiaries will be provided with freshly cooked, healthy, halal meals. On Wednesday and Thursday an advice worker will be present to give general advice on issues such as utilities, rent, finances and to answer any queries.

This funding request is for £14,872 with a total project cost of £30,232. This request is a contribution towards staff costs for the project manager, advice worker and cleaner for the 12 months. The remainder of the project is covered through in-kind venue support and service users paying £2.00 for meals.

Year 1 Outcomes

Last year, £12,770 was awarded towards this project. Sessions were to take place Monday to Thursday at Teviot Community Hall to provide a chance to socialise, gain access to support services, learn healthy recipes and take part in traditional Somali dance classes. Additionally, an advice worker employed at the centre was to give advice on issues such as benefits, rent and utilities. Due to the pandemic, the lunch club was moved online. The group organised activities via Zoom and Whatsapp and reach out/support from advice workers.

In Year 1:

- 46 people directly benefited from their services, 26 of which were new to the organisation
 - Moving services online enabled the group to safely support a greater number of participants and referrals, with an initial goal of 20 people, they surpassed that with their reach of 46
 - 208 activity sessions were held totaling 832 hours of activity

delivered with the funding through Zoom and Whatsapp

- Advice workers helped people to access services, book appointments and helped with queries relating to a range of issues, from housing to debt relief.
- Online sessions and forums educated service users about the pandemic, providing them with weekly Covid-19 safety updates and online exercise classes for differing abilities. One-on-one calls and socially distanced check-ins from advice workers were made including running errands and food distribution to service users

With this funding, the group was able to facilitate socialising with isolated older adults during the pandemic. The group states that many of their participants felt extreme loneliness before joining the service and that all participants provided feedback of reduced amounts of anxiety and loneliness.

Assessor's Comments

Wadajir Somali Community Centre is a user-led voluntary organisation aimed at supporting social integration and improving economic opportunities for their service users. Their lunch club is stated to be the only one in Tower Hamlets that specifically targets elderly women from the Somali community. During the lockdowns in 2020, the women the group reached out to were not contacted by any other groups or organisations and had no other access to services.

Need is further demonstrated indicating that elderly Somali women are said to be one of the most isolated segments of society, with the majority being illiterate, with very limited English language skills. The 2011 Tower Hamlets census found that 70% of older Somali-born residents living in the borough (aged 65 and over) have a limiting health condition. The group states that many of their Somali members attend the Centre because it is one of the few places that they can communicate their needs in their mother tongue.

With the return to the Centre and in-person activities this year, outcomes for Year 2 are for service users to regain independence and confidence through socialising in-person and strengthening their social network and improve the mental and physical health of participants. The weekly Somali dance lessons aim to contribute to a positive physical activity experience. To measure results, feedback will be collected throughout the project. The final feedback session will take place at the end of the 12-month project to reflect on successes and areas for improvement.

During the past year and a half, the desire for a return to in-person meetings has been expressed by the group's service users. The purpose of the club is to provide a safe space for women over 55 years old to relax, socialise, gain knowledge and access services in the borough. The project is aligned with this theme and has demonstrated positive outcomes in Year 1 and consultation with beneficiaries. The project's contingency plan for the second year is to follow with the same Covid-19 amendments from Year 1 if needed and following government guidelines.

Recommendation (conditions if applicable)

Recommended for a grant of £12,500 in line with budget available.

